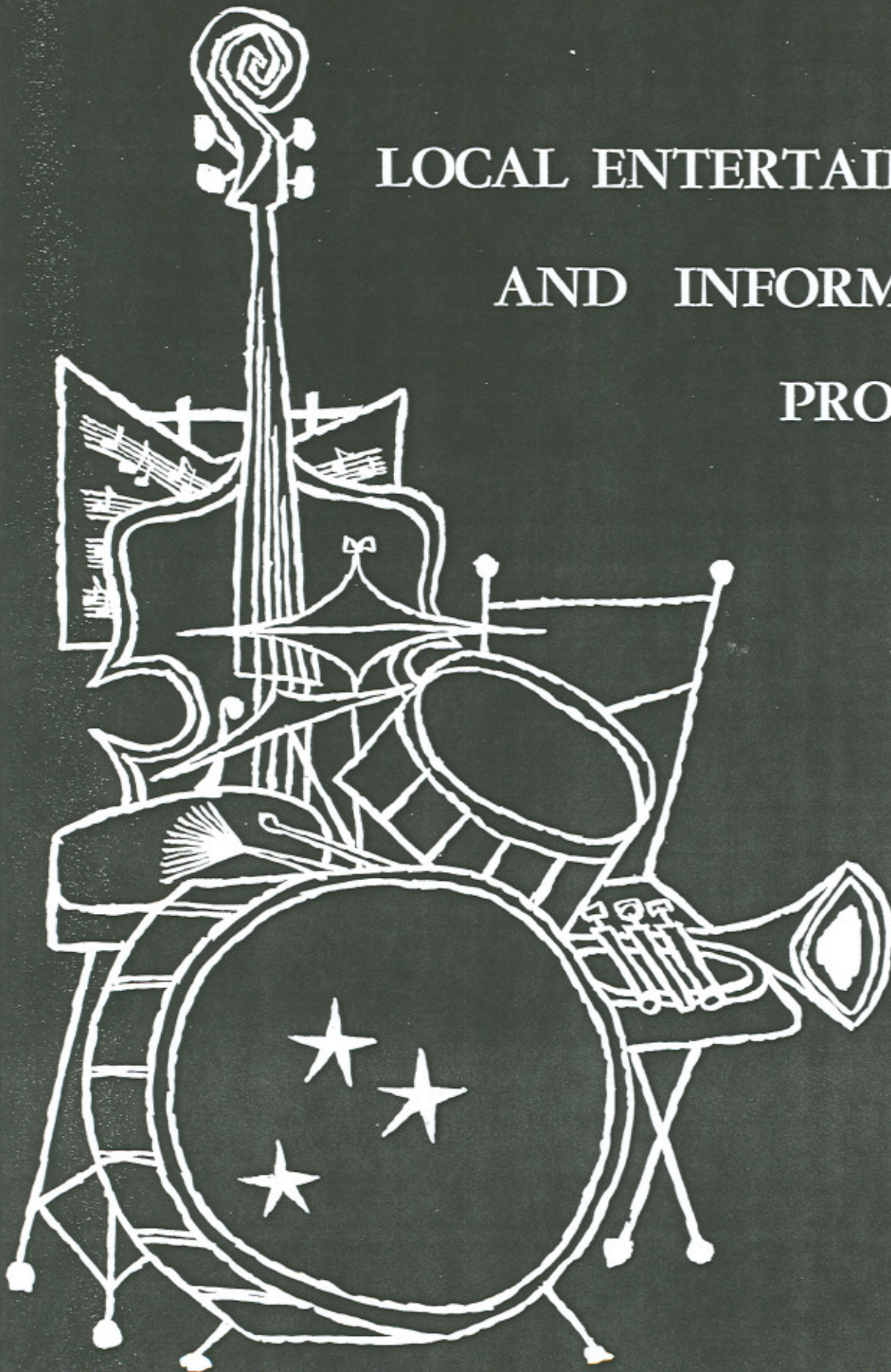


LOCAL ENTERTAINMENT  
AND INFORMATION  
PROGRAMS





## CHAPTER VIII

### LOCAL ENTERTAINMENT AND INFORMATION PROGRAMS

Local productions, tailored to the needs and desires of a locale, can be good morale builders as well as excellent local program building devices. Earnest efforts should be made for a degree of professionalism which will satisfy the listening or viewing audience. These shows should supplement stateside transcribed or filmed features and professional performers should not be sacrificed for these local offerings.

Listeners and viewers will want, first, their favorite stateside programs. When a choice must be made between a program, popular at home, and a local production of unknown or dubious quality, it will always be desirable to schedule the higher-rated professional segment. Recognized local talent should not be discouraged, but used wisely.

Amateurism in radio and television can be guarded against with careful pre-program planning. Mechanics are different, but basic general areas of activity are common to each medium. These include:

1. Casting
2. Rehearsing
3. Timing
4. Staging
5. Writing

Casting is extremely important. A good script, program idea or format can be nullified with a poorly selected performer. The viewer or listener does not expect seasoned professional quality. This fact should not be an excuse to accept mediocrity when time and research will bring to the microphone or camera a more acceptable personality.

Rehearsing is the key to smooth production for both radio and television. Unsure and faltering performers can be made less so with adequate rehearsal. This is particularly true in television, where the additional dimension of video is a complicating factor in establishing the final intricate composite of sight and sound. Adequate rehearsing before air time will blend all ingredients into a seemingly effortless and enjoyable pattern for the television viewer. The cardinal responsibility of the station Program Director is to make arrangements for sufficient rehearsal time for local offerings. If this prerequisite has been overlooked, cancellations are in order, rather than risk antagonizing an audience with poorly prepared material.

Timing will distinguish the professional from the amateur. There is no exception in either medium. The mechanics of timing a radio or television program is an individual matter. Methods and procedures will vary with individuals controlling the program. The important consideration to remember is that an audience expects disciplined programming and nothing will aggravate viewers or listeners more than sloppily-timed material. Station Program Directors should guarantee against infractions of timing by reiterating to station personnel that timing is an important step in the pre-program planning of their assigned units.

Staging is important to radio, only in so far as variety or audience participation programs are concerned. Where possible, these should be played before an audience, since laughter and reactions are contagious and sweep listeners into the program's spirit. Mounting or staging for these radio segments can be simple, but it should present a



pleasant and comfortable framework for the audience, with the stage being the focal point of interest. Staging for the television camera is of paramount importance and for this reason more time will have to be allocated in pre-program planning. In stations where radio and television are side by side, the alert Program Director will caution personnel against transferring radio formats or ideas to television, without the necessary adjustments for effective visual presentation of an idea. Television is a visual art; the viewer knows this and expects it, even in a local offering.

Writing is probably the most important tool in pre-program planning. Radio writing consists of mood music and sound effects so blended as to provoke pictures, thoughts and action in the listener's mind. Television writing adds to these ingredients, movement of a camera and performers. In addition to sound, it presents action and depth to the viewer and this makes it differ materially from radio writing. In either case, radio or television writing is vital and necessary to pre-production planning. Whether it is a formal script or a series of notes, competent radio and television production personnel should not ignore writing in their pre-program planning.

#### TYPES OF PROGRAMS TO BE CONSIDERED

Depending on talent and facilities available, the station Program Director should consider the following types of programs for his local program building:

- Audience participation

- Variety

- Dramatic

- Programs for children

- Special features for women

- Musical

- Documentary

##### 1. Audience Participation

Audience participation programs may be an excellent opportunity for many types of programs. At most military installations, this type of program will be largely confined to competition of one form or another, especially when used on a regular basis. Two branches of service, or two units of an organization, may be pitted against each other. The show can become an off-duty attraction at the Post Theatre or in an outdoor area. The microphones and cameras should be spotted carefully. The radio or television audience must be considered, as well as the captive audience. The competition can be centered around the identity of tunes played by an orchestra, definition of words, or questions of broad, general knowledge.

The simpler the questions, the better. The audience, in knowing the answers, will usually enjoy the attempts of contestants to think of them. Tangible prizes should be offered, such as theatre tickets, a weekend trip, cigarettes, candy, and the like. The audience will understand a station's inability to award elaborate prizes.

##### 2. Variety

Variety shows are composed of various and frequently contrasting elements. Comedy and music are alternated; each act is complete in itself. Local production of such features demands high professionalism. If such talent is available, it should reach the audience in creditable style, or not at all.



### **3. Dramatic**

For dramatic programs, moderately good acting, good scripts and adequate technical arrangements and direction are important requirements. Dramatic programs should be plays written specifically for radio or television. The length will vary from fifteen minutes to an hour. Shorter scripts should deal with one situation, one plot idea. These should usually build to a surprise or dramatic ending. Longer scripts must sustain interest over a greater period of time and can consist of two or more basic plot variations or complications. Here again, a high degree of professionalism is required.

### **4. Programs for Children**

If the size of the juvenile population warrants it, this type of local programming can make the radio or television station a vital part of the military community. The facilities available for audience participation and the production talent available, either on the staff or from the command, will determine the extent of this type of programming. A children's program may be a studio production involving a single microphone or camera and a single person. It may be an audience participation feature, involving multiple studio and stage facilities, as well as technical equipment and abilities. This specialized type of programming must be measured carefully and should be attempted only as talent and facilities permit doing well.

Camera and microphone personnel for this type of program should be carefully screened and auditioned. Knowledge of children, genuine interest, personality, microphone technique or camera presence, are important ingredients for the success of a children's program, particularly in the actual broadcast contest with youngsters. In addition, personnel conducting such programs, whether male or female, should elicit genuine acceptability from the juvenile audience. This factor will largely determine the wearing quality of a children's program.

A program which permits actual participation by children will usually be popular, but this demands the physical presence of the youngsters, which may have the effect of limiting attendance. Analysis by the Program Director and the Station Manager will determine if this is a factor to consider. One cardinal rule to keep in mind regarding programs for children is to program the type of feature which best fits available facilities on hand and the needs of the command.

### **5. Special Features for Women**

Frequently, a diversity of talent can be found among women's groups within the command. Women with previous professional experience in radio and television, and who can provide a daily or regular homemaker's show, are often available. There are others who are able to conduct interviews of general interest, and those who can conduct women's forum features. Such features provide entertainment and helpful information of interest to wives and service women stationed within the command.

Radio and television are apt to be close companions to wives of service personnel. Particularly where there are limited recreational facilities for dependents, broadcast facilities can be important diversions, if not a vital environmental part of daily living. Women's shows require considerable creativeness. They cannot be merely chaty, if they are to survive. Women's shows generally should be thirty minutes in length, or less. A program which combines participation of both children and women should be worthy of consideration, providing, of course, the proper talent and direction are available.

Even a small studio program, with a pleasant voice or good camera presence



and presenting program content of genuine interest, can be a welcome diversion to women who are stationed with their husbands, far from home. The content of such programs should be attuned to the definite need.

#### 6. Musical

Musical programs present peculiar problems. Unless there is a local professional musical group at the station's disposal, amateur groups should not be used in longer than fifteen minute segments. Amateurs or semi-professional musicians and soloists usually have not acquired the change of pace of seasoned performers, necessary to sustain a thirty minute unit. Live talent should be carefully auditioned, and with discrimination. A competent performer, or musical group of any category — hillbilly, classical or popular — deserves consideration, regardless of the musical preference of station personnel conducting the audition. Certain amateur talent will also have a special human interest element, which should not be overlooked. For example, a handicapped person, with special musical ability, can be a real inspiration, without being highly professional. Such abilities should be recognized, but not exploited.

#### 7. Documentary

A documentary explores or explains a subject; it is an important program segment in carrying out the objectives of the Information mission. There are two principal types of documentary programs:

Essay documentary

Drama documentary

a. The essay documentary is a narrative for the ear. It may be a lecture, an article, a detailed discussion on a particular thought area, rather than a story. The essayist in this type of documentary is usually a narrator. His voice keynotes, explains and unifies all elements of the subject. Many times, dramatic scenes are incorporated to illustrate and point up facts the narrator is stressing. Use of actual people of a region, instead of actors, in dramatic dialogue, can be employed effectively for authenticity. In certain instances, this technique has a distinct advantage over use of professional actors. Sound effect patterns and recorded music underscoring to establish mood and set scene for dramatic inserts, also make effective production.

d. The drama documentary does not necessarily utilize a narrator to tie together all segments of a subject. Emphasis is on story stemming from the basic idea, projected and developed by the writer, in a logical sequence of situations and characters.

Personnel of all Armed Forces Radio and Television Stations will find themselves actively associated with the Information programs of all branches of the Armed Forces. Basic policy and guide lines will be set down by higher command, but the day-to-day implementation of policy will be executed by station personnel.

#### OBJECTIVES OF THE ARMED FORCES INFORMATION PROGRAM

Everyone connected with either radio or television should be familiar with the following objectives of the Armed Forces Information Program as formulated by the Office of Armed Forces Information and Education:

1. To inform Service personnel and to provide factual information for understanding our obligations as American citizens, and for the protection of our way of life.
2. To keep before our military personnel our country's objective of freedom and re-

spect for all human rights. Through informational programs, the individual serviceman is provided an understanding of:

- a. Our representative form of government.
  - b. The responsibilities and obligations to serve and the privileges he enjoys under our form of government.
  - c. The faith and trust that we, as Americans, place in our fellowman.
  - d. The value and dignity of the individual.
  - e. The missions of our Armed Forces, their relationship to each other, and the importance of each serviceman's contribution to the national defense program.
3. To make each serviceman fully conscious of:
    - a. National and international problems and issues which have an impact on his life and upon his attitudes and conduct at home and abroad.
    - b. Soviet Communism, its meaning, aims and objectives, and its conflict with the free world's concepts of decency, integrity and fair play.
    - c. The worth of the individual and the rights assured him by our form of government.
  4. To encourage all members of the Armed Forces to take advantage of opportunities available to them in voluntary off-duty programs of academic, technical and vocational education.

The foregoing objectives place a serious responsibility on personnel operating an Armed Forces Radio or Television Station. Effective implementation of these objectives, in local spot announcements and programs, will demand serious study and evaluation of the material and the audience at hand. Problems will differ from area to area, but the enterprising Program Director will think and plan as a commercial advertising man: **KNOW THE PRODUCT — KNOW THE AUDIENCE!**